

Japanese Embassy  
2516 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D. C.

HABS No. DC-264

HABS  
WASH,  
207-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation  
National Park Service  
Department of Interior  
Washington, D. C. 20240

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. DC-264

## JAPANESE EMBASSY

WASH, 207-

Location: 2516 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D. C.  
UTM: 18.321695 .4309200

Present Owner: Japan

Present Use: Embassy residence.

Significance: This building, in the Georgian manner, was designed as an embassy. It exemplifies the last stage of Beaux-Arts influence in Washington and is one of the few full-scale, formal estates in the city. The estate includes the house and its dependencies (with a tea house, two chancery buildings, and recreational facilities). Located on Square 2500, Lots 851, 852, and 853 (formerly Lots 8-16 and 35-43); and Lots 871, 873, and 874, the landscaping complements Rock Creek Park.

HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

Original Owner: Japan  
Original Use: Embassy residence.  
Date of Erection: 1931  
Architects: Delano and Aldrich, New York.  
Builder: Unknown. Japan, as a foreign government, was not required to file for D. C. building permits.  
Estimated Cost: \$500,000, according to Federal Writers' Project, Washington City and Capital (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1937), p. 689.  
Subsequent Owners: None

## City and Telephone Directories List:

1932-1941	Japanese Embassy
1942-1948	Japanese Embassy
1949-1953	No listing found.
1954-1972	Japanese Embassy

Known Plans, Drawings, Sections, etc.: None found.

Important Old Views: None found.

## Building Dimensions:

Stories: 2 and 1/2 plus two basement levels.

Height: approximately 31'-0" to eaves.

Bays: 7 bays on Mass. Ave.  
6 bays on east (south bay, 1 story)  
6 bays at south  
5 bays at west

Widths: 98'-10" on Mass. Ave.  
78'-9" at east (last bay extends 16'-0" beyond  
south elevation)  
99'-0" at south (Rock Creek Park)  
62'-9" at west

Site Dimensions:

450'-0" on north  
275'-0" on east  
450'-0" on south  
275'-0" on west

Major Alterations:

No significant changes have been made.

PROJECT INFORMATION

This document, made from records donated to the Historic American Buildings Survey by the Commission of Fine Arts, 708 Jackson Place, N.W., Washington, D. C., represents studies of prime, typical, diversified and sumptuous architecture erected primarily between the years 1890 and 1930, when American society and architecture were greatly influenced by the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. The material, originally organized for adaptation to the Historic American Buildings Survey format, was first published in Massachusetts Avenue Architecture, Vol. 1, in 1973, issued by the Commission of Fine Arts, Charles H. Atherton, Secretary; Donald B. Myer, Assistant Secretary; Jeffrey R. Carson, Architectural Historian; Lynda L. Smith, Historian; and J. L. Sibley Jennings, Jr., Architect. Photographs were made for the Commission by Jack E. Boucher, Linwood, New Jersey; J. Alexander, Wheaton, Maryland; and the Commission of Fine Arts Staff. The material, donated December 1973, was coordinated for the HABS documentation in 1978 by Lucy Pope Wheeler, HABS Writer/Editor.

Documentation of this property could not have been achieved without the cooperation of organizations and people concerned with the Commission's study--The Embassy of Japan, His Excellency Nobuhiko Ushiba, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Mr. Sho Watanabe, First Secretary (Construction), and Mr. Masato Akazawa, Third Secretary.